



TITLE, HOOK, AND CLOSING

Your Title

Your title has three important jobs:

- It should make your audience want to read your essay.
- It should communicate the topic of your essay.
- It should hint at what your point of view will be.

A title like “Horrible Behavior” might be interesting, but it doesn’t give the reader a clear sense of what the essay is going to be about. A title like “School is Important” is clear, but it could be more interesting. The most effective titles do all three jobs: they are creative enough to be interesting, but they also convey your topic and point of view clearly.

Here are some different types of titles, plus an example of each kind.

1-Part Titles

Question

Could Wiping Out Grades Improve Learning?

Statement

It’s Time for Grades to Go

The Case for...

The Case for Throwing Out Grades

“Why” Title

Why Grades Need to be Abolished

2-Part Titles

Topic: Question

Grades: Should They Be Abolished?

Topic: Statement

Grades: It's Time for Them to Go

Creative Phrase + 1-Part Title

A Radical Idea: Why Grades Need to Be Abolished

Quality, Not Quantity: The Case for Throwing Out Grades

Capitalizing Your Title

When you write your title, you need to capitalize *almost* every word of it.

Here are the rules:

- Always capitalize the **first and last word** of the title, no matter what. If you are doing a 2-part title, also capitalize the first word of the second part.
- Capitalize **all other words except articles** (a, an, the), **conjunctions** (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet) and **short prepositions** (at, by, for, in, of, off, on, to).
- Capitalize short verbs such as **be, am, is, and was**. Even though they are short, because they are verbs and not "connecting" words like those above, they get capitalized.

Your Hook

The **hook** is the first few sentences of an essay, the part where you are grabbing your reader's attention. It comes even before you build background knowledge or present your thesis statement. Here are six types of hooks, along with an example of each:

Question or Series of Questions

What does an A really mean? Or a C, for that matter? When a student gets an F, does it mean he didn't learn anything?

Quote

"In school, many of us procrastinate and then successfully cram for tests. We get the grades and degrees we need to get the jobs we want, even if we fail to get a good general education." —Stephen Covey

Anecdote

Melissa Thomas thought she was learning a lot in social studies this semester. She had developed a fascination with the ancient Greeks, could tell you all kinds of things about landforms on a map, and was finding herself watching the History Channel for fun. So when she got a D on her report card, she was shocked.

Statistic or Fact

Teachers may be surprised to learn that most of the written comments they give to students are never even read. That's because if there's also a grade on the paper, many students will just read the grade and ignore the comments.

Strong Statement

One of the most time-honored traditions of school may be its biggest problem: Grades.

Description

Your eyes quickly travel down the list: A, A, A-, and then, there it is: a .C. What? How did you get a C? That's right; it's report card time, the time when your performance in school is reduced to a single letter.

Your Closing Paragraph

The last paragraph of your essay needs to include several things:

- A **restatement of your thesis** and a **brief summary of your main points**. Word these differently from how you did it in the introduction.
- Some **connection to your hook**. Although this is not required, it will make for a more polished and artful essay.
- A powerful, memorable **closing thought**. Here are some options:

Question

The system we have right now clearly isn't working for everyone; isn't it time we tried something radically different?

End of Anecdote

Without grades, students like Melissa are left only with their love of learning.

Positive Prediction

If schools take the brave step away from grades, they're likely to discover something they've wanted all along: Students who truly love to learn.

Negative Prediction

If we keep the current grading system as it is, many of our students will never know the true joy of learning.

Powerful Image or Description

Just imagine it: Instead of asking "What do I have to do to get an A?" students will want to know how they can improve, grow, and learn more.

What to Do Now

In whatever order you want to do it, draft a **title**, **hook**, and **closing** for your essay. To see this in action, look at [Essay 1, Draft 3](#), which now has a revised title, a new hook, and a closing.